



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

Veterans' Day, 2004: Honoring a Legacy of Sacrifice

By Congressman Ron Kind

This past year truly has been an exceptional one in honoring our nation's veterans. From the dedication of the National World War II Memorial in May to the marking of the 60th anniversary of D Day, we have had many opportunities to pay public tribute to the brave men and women who served our country. While much of the focus this year has been on World War II veterans, Veterans' Day has always been a time for honoring all who have given service to our nation.

In May of this year, it was a great honor to join in the celebration for the dedication of the National World War II Memorial. Almost six decades after the end of the war, a monument has at last been built in our nation's capital that pays tribute to the generation that fought and won World War II. The monument, set in the middle of the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument, will remind all visitors to the city that World War II was the defining event of the 20th Century and the seminal point for what is often and aptly called "the Greatest Generation."

It also has been my good fortune to spend some time with veterans and their families in western Wisconsin, and I always enjoy hearing their wartime stories. In fact, it was the experience of listening to my uncle and father, who served abroad, that inspired me to introduce legislation creating The Veterans History Project. Almost four years after becoming public law, the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress has collected well over 25,000 recorded oral histories and is working at a feverish pace to collect more everyday. This living legacy is testament to the millions of Americans who sacrificed so much defending our country.

This Veterans' Day, I am pleased to join the Library of Congress in celebrating a new book showcasing the extraordinary sacrifices of our nation's veterans, *"Voices of War: Stories of Service From the Home Front and the Front Lines."* Culled from an assemblage of compelling oral histories, letters, photographs and personal diaries from the Veterans History Project collections, *"Voices of War"* provides a unique eyewitness record of 20th century America at war and is a powerful illustration of how this country has survived the great wartime challenges of the century. The practice of documenting our veterans' stories will continue as we welcome back our brave troops serving our nation today.

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This Veterans' Day, I am at Camp Shelby in Mississippi to send off the 680 members of the 128th National Guard Infantry Unit based in Eau Claire, WI. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deep admiration and thanks to the veterans of and those currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in other parts of the world. Our troops have been asked to do a great deal under difficult circumstances, and their dedication to this country is truly an inspiration to all Americans. This Veterans' Day we commemorate the brave service of our nation's veterans and honor our soldiers who continue to serve this country with great dignity and courage.

To find out more information on the Veterans' History Project, please visit <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/>.